

Vocational and employment training for court-involved youth

Juvenile Justice

Benefit-cost estimates updated December 2019. Literature review updated July 2019.

Current estimates replace old estimates. Numbers will change over time as a result of model inputs and monetization methods.

The WSIPP benefit-cost analysis examines, on an apples-to-apples basis, the monetary value of programs or policies to determine whether the benefits from the program exceed its costs. WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps. First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using a statistical technique called meta-analysis. Second, we calculate whether the benefits of a program exceed its costs. Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a program by testing the sensitivity of our results. For more detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#).

Program Description: Vocational and employment training includes a combination of vocational skills training, academic education or tutoring, and job search assistance or placement programs. These programs aim to support positive outcomes to reduce recidivism, specifically steady, long-term employment and education attainment. Vocational skills training uses classroom-based job training to teach youth employable skills. As part of some training curriculums, youth can receive certification in a variety of specialties. For programs that focus on job search assistance, youth participate in interview preparation, resume building, or job placement services aided by community volunteers. Commonly, job assistance programs provide total or subsidized wages which offer an additional incentive to employers in the community to work with youth.

The current analysis includes programs that provide services to youth while on probation in the community. Youth in the studies are classified as moderate or high risk per a validated risk assessment tool. In the included studies, participants receive services over three to six months. Of the studies in our analysis that reported demographic information, 55% of participants were youth of color and 14% were female.

Evaluations of Education and Employment Training (EET), mentoring programs, and vocational and employment training programs that occur while youth are in state institutions are excluded from this analysis and analyzed separately.

Benefit-Cost Summary Statistics Per Participant

Benefits to:

Taxpayers	\$2,652	Benefit to cost ratio	\$4.17
Participants	\$517	Benefits minus costs	\$7,106
Others	\$6,107	Chance the program will produce	
Indirect	\$75	benefits greater than the costs	82 %
Total benefits	\$9,350		
Net program cost	(\$2,244)		
Benefits minus cost	\$7,106		

The estimates shown are present value, life cycle benefits and costs. All dollars are expressed in the base year chosen for this analysis (2018). The chance the benefits exceed the costs are derived from a Monte Carlo risk analysis. The details on this, as well as the economic discount rates and other relevant parameters are described in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Detailed Monetary Benefit Estimates Per Participant

Benefits from changes to:¹

Benefits to:

	Participants	Taxpayers	Others ²	Indirect ³	Total
Crime	\$0	\$2,452	\$5,799	\$1,226	\$9,477
Labor market earnings associated with high school graduation	\$603	\$257	\$334	\$0	\$1,194
Costs of higher education	(\$87)	(\$57)	(\$26)	(\$29)	(\$199)
Adjustment for deadweight cost of program	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,122)	(\$1,122)
Totals	\$517	\$2,652	\$6,107	\$75	\$9,350

¹In addition to the outcomes measured in the meta-analysis table, WSIPP measures benefits and costs estimated from other outcomes associated with those reported in the evaluation literature. For example, empirical research demonstrates that high school graduation leads to reduced crime. These associated measures provide a more complete picture of the detailed costs and benefits of the program.

²"Others" includes benefits to people other than taxpayers and participants. Depending on the program, it could include reductions in crime victimization, the economic benefits from a more educated workforce, and the benefits from employer-paid health insurance.

³"Indirect benefits" includes estimates of the net changes in the value of a statistical life and net changes in the deadweight costs of taxation.

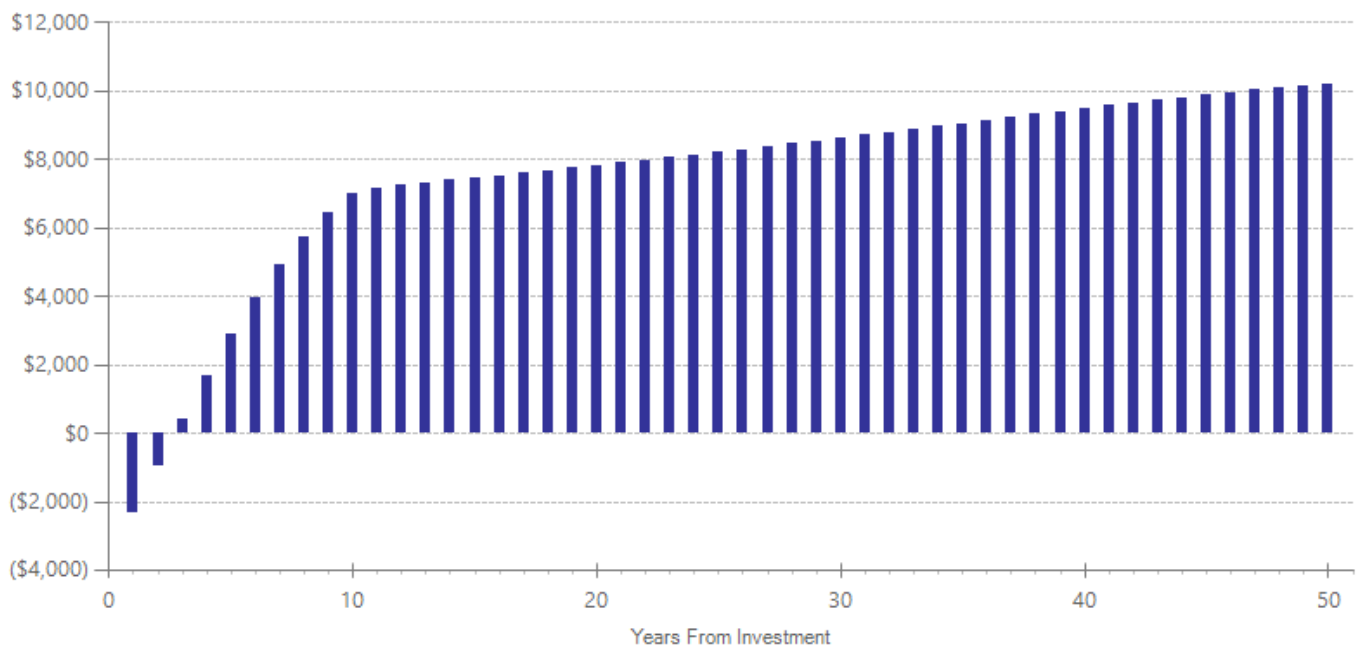
Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant

	Annual cost	Year dollars	Summary
Program costs	\$2,130	2016	Present value of net program costs (in 2018 dollars)
Comparison costs	\$0	2016	Cost range (+ or -)
			20 %

We estimate the per-participant cost of treatment from the cost of Education and Employment Training (EET), a similarly structured vocational and employment training program used in Washington State. We use the weighted average length of treatment of the included studies (4.8 months) and apply the per-month expenditure calculated from the information reported in Miller, M., Fumia, D., & He, L. (2015). The King County Education and Employment Training (EET) Program: Outcome evaluation and benefit-cost analysis. (Doc. No. 15-12-3901). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

The figures shown are estimates of the costs to implement programs in Washington. The comparison group costs reflect either no treatment or treatment as usual, depending on how effect sizes were calculated in the meta-analysis. The cost range reported above reflects potential variation or uncertainty in the cost estimate; more detail can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant



The graph above illustrates the estimated cumulative net benefits per-participant for the first fifty years beyond the initial investment in the program. We present these cash flows in non-discounted dollars to simplify the “break-even” point from a budgeting perspective. If the dollars are negative (bars below \$0 line), the cumulative benefits do not outweigh the cost of the program up to that point in time. The program breaks even when the dollars reach \$0. At this point, the total benefits to participants, taxpayers, and others, are equal to the cost of the program. If the dollars are above \$0, the benefits of the program exceed the initial investment.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects											
Outcomes measured	Treatment age	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis						Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
				First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated				
				ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Alcohol use [^]	16	1	50	0.010	0.203	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.010	0.959
Cannabis use [^]	16	1	50	0.183	0.204	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.183	0.369
Crime	16	5	703	-0.114	0.085	17	-0.114	0.085	25	-0.114	0.180
Employment ^{^^}	16	1	50	0.738	0.276	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.738	0.008
Externalizing behavior symptoms ^{^^}	16	1	50	0.431	0.208	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.431	0.038
High school graduation ^{^^}	16	1	50	-0.382	0.367	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	-0.382	0.299
Illicit drug use [^]	16	1	50	0.034	0.203	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.034	0.866
Internalizing symptoms ^{^^}	16	1	50	0.077	0.207	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.077	0.709
Problem alcohol use ^{^^}	16	1	50	-0.057	0.203	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	-0.057	0.780

[^]WSIPP’s benefit-cost model does not monetize this outcome.
^{^^}WSIPP does not include this outcome when conducting benefit-cost analysis for this program.

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Gruenewald, P.J., Laurence, S.E., & West, B.R. (1985). *National evaluation of the New Pride replication program, final report - Volume II: Client impact evaluation*. Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE).

Quay, H.C., & Love, C.T. (1977). The effect of a juvenile diversion program on rearrests. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 4, 377-396.

Schaeffer, C.M., Henggeler, S.W., Ford, J.D., Mann, M., Chang, R., & Chapman, J.E. (2014). RCT of a promising vocational/employment program for high-risk juvenile offenders. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 46 (2), 134-143.

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Printed on 10-17-2020



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